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DEPT FOR DS, L, EUR/UMB

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/24/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PINR](#) [BO](#)  
SUBJECT: STATE MEDIA ACCUSES EMBASSY OF ESPIONAGE

Classified By: Charge Jonathan Moore for reason 1.4 (d).

Ref: A) Putz-Shear eMail 03/24/08  
B) Minsk 208 and previous  
C) 07 Minsk 154

11. (C) In its "analytical" program "Panorama of the Week" Belarusian State Television Channel One included a seven-minute piece accusing Post's Surveillance Detection (SD) Team of espionage and Post's Assistant Regional Security Officer (ARSO) of being an undercover agent of the FBI. [Note: An Embassy translation of the report was emailed both to DS and EUR/UMB -- ref A. End note.] The report follows a March 13 incident in which both uniformed and plainclothes police demanded entry to an apartment used to coordinate SD activities and the March 15 questioning of all of the members of the SD Team.

12. (C) Charge dismissed the allegations in a March 24 interview with the independent news agency Belapan, noting that the names of all Embassy employees, including SD Team members, were submitted to the MFA and that our RSO Office liaises with the Ministry of Internal Affairs on security matters. The ARSO, who was the subject of the allegations, has already departed post as part of a drawdown of U.S. Embassy staff (ref B).

Comment

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13. (C) "Panorama of the Week" has slandered the staff of the U.S. Embassy and other Western missions on a regular basis for years (ref C). That said, this incident represents a serious escalation in Belarusian harassment of the Embassy's American and Locally-Employed Staff.

Moore